

**Kathmandu** -- On November 20, 2009, the world marks 46th Anniversary of the Universal Children's Day. In Nepal, among other celebrations, UCAAN, using the synergy of its partnership, has organized an event to make key stakeholders and general public aware about the needs of Children Affected by AIDS (CABA) in Nepal and to promote the wellbeing of these children.

The event was planned to present to the public the concept of children affected by AIDS in a non-stigmatizing environment. In total, 100 children from Sol-Himal Umbrella Foundation, Maiti Nepal, Friends of Needy Children and Keta Ketu Asharam participated in the event and also showed their skills at singing and dancing. Also, in the presence of the children, members from the Ministry of Health and Population, Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare, members from the private sector, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and other donors, national and international NGOs, UN agencies, community leaders across the country and the media, UCAAN unveiled the concept of "UCAAN Brand Ambassadors" and introduced Sugarika KC, Manavi Dhakal, Vinay Shrestha, Priti Rizal and Saloni Rajbhandari as UCAAN Ambassadors. These ambassadors will voluntarily be working for the cause of children affected by AIDS to raise awareness regarding the needs of these children.

Jed Meline, Deputy Director of USAID/Nepal, present at the event said, "Today is a chance to celebrate children because, if we give them the chance, they will become the great leaders of tomorrow. And that responsibility lies in our hands. So I urge everyone to pledge access to education, health care, food, water, and security, so all children can achieve their dreams, irrespective of caste, color, creed or health."

Responding to the issue of CABA in Nepal, Basanta Chhetri, General Secretary at UNICEF and Co-Chair of UCAAN says "All children have the right to protection. Exploitation increases when parents or caregivers are absent due to illness, death or abandonment. Because such problems are highly likely to cluster in the lives of children affected by AIDS, they are particularly vulnerable to protection violations. I call everyone to unite for enhanced social protection, legal protection and justice, and alternative care, to address the silence and stigma that allow discrimination, abuse and exploitation of children to continue".

UCAAN welcomes interested parties to join the partnership. We look forward to your support to further this important initiative which will improve the lives of Nepali children and will motivate others to get involved in the fight against HIV/AIDS and children affected by AIDS in Nepal.

UCAAN is a national partnership launched in 2007 by USAID, UNICEF, FHI, and NAP+N to support the

Children account for half of all the new HIV infections worldwide and it is estimated that approximately o